



February, 2018

The early years
matter!



Voices from the Field

By Karen Karten, Somerset County

School Readiness a Priority in Somerset County!

Located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Somerset County is one of the smallest counties in Maryland. Our distance from the metropolitan area might limit the services that are available to our families, and the rural nature of our county can make transportation very difficult. Somerset is also the poorest county in the state, and a significant number of our students are considered to be "academically at risk." Our county is very diverse and we have had a recent increase in English Learners. However, even with these challenges, we have made school readiness a top priority, and as a result 57% of our students are entering Kindergarten ready to learn! Too often learning gaps occur even before students enter our schools, so over the past few years the county has been committed to increasing school readiness in our community. We have done this in several ways:



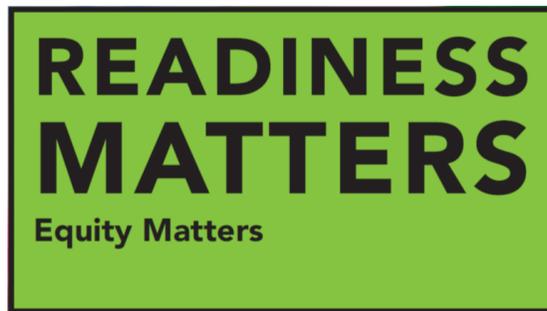
- **Full Day/Universal PreK:** Full day PreK has made a huge impact on school readiness in our community, and providing PreK for all students provides an

extra year of school support. Not only do we see families embrace PreK (with almost 80% of our Kindergarteners having PreK as their prior care), but we have seen an increase in daily attendance. We are committed to providing an academic environment for students, and support learning through play so that students gain a love of learning that will last forever. We promote the use of learning centers and guided play. Our teachers implement [PEEP](#), [VIOLETS](#) and [ReadyRosie](#) in their classrooms.

- **Social Foundations:** Students who attended PreK as their prior year experience have an extra year in school. This leads to an increase in school readiness in the social foundations domain. Students show an increase in their approaches to learning, their ability to follow directions, engage with others, and problem solve. Somerset has implemented 36 Skills, Knowledge and Behaviors (SKB's) of the Early Learning Assessment (ELA), and data shows a huge gain in this domain from the start of PreK to the start of Kindergarten. Students who enter school with greater social foundational skills will be more likely to succeed in school.
- **Focus on Math and Language and Literacy:** Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data showed a need to target our student's math readiness. As we know it is important to "listen to your data," the county addressed this need this year, as we adopted a new math curriculum, and our PreK teachers have begun working intensely with a math consultant. The county provides math initiatives for students, and provides family engagement activities, math rotations as well as fun math take home programming. Language and Literacy is also a focus, and the county has embraced [Raising A Reader](#). Today, all of our PreK, K, Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms are enjoying the Raising A Reader program. Joint professional development opportunities have been provided for teachers, child care providers and Head Start teachers in the areas of math and literacy, and our PreK and K teachers have been working closely with our Special Education teachers to improve our inclusion practices. We are excited to see the gap begin to close between our Special Education and typically developing students.
- **Judy Centers:** Somerset County was the last county in the state to get a Judy Center, but now both ends of the county are able to receive services from this important partnership. We rely heavily on the partnerships with Head Start and Child Care as well as other community partners to help increase the school readiness of our youngest learners. Programming includes Birth to Three play groups, parent engagement activities as well as parent workshops, [Learning Parties](#), and even a diaper distribution and parent education program. Parents receive school readiness materials and learn ways to engage their babies and toddlers through this type of programming. The Judy Center provides a Child Care Story Time program for local child care providers. Providers receive information and materials based on the [Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy](#), children enjoy a 30 minute story time presentation and activity, and parents receive materials and books to enjoy at home with their children. The Judy Center Partnership is very strong and includes members from the business world, three higher education partners, and two local museums, as well as pediatric, dental and mental health care partners. These partners come together and ultimately have a huge impact on our county's families and on school readiness.

Somerset County may be small, but we work very hard to make the most of the

resources we have, and very often those resources include the amazing members of our community. We feel this commitment to invest makes the difference!



2017-2018 New Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Data

Maryland's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is a developmentally appropriate observational and assessment tool administered to kindergarteners in the fall of each year that measures school readiness across four domains.

Please visit [Readiness Matters 2018](#) to see the state, jurisdictional, and subgroup data.

Save the Date!

Our next School Readiness Symposium will take place on May 17, 2018 at the BWI Airport Marriott and will feature Stephanie Jones, Council of

Distinguished Scientists, National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development at the Aspen Institute. She is the Marie and Max Kargman Associate Professor in Human Development and Urban Education. Her research, anchored in prevention science, focuses on the effects of poverty and exposure to violence on children and youth's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Over the last ten years her work has focused on both evaluation research addressing the impact of preschool and elementary focused social-emotional learning interventions on behavioral and academic outcomes and classroom practices; as well as new curriculum development, implementation, and testing. Jones is a recipient of the Grawemeyer Award in Education for her work with Zigler and Walter Gilliam on *A Vision for Universal Preschool Education* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) and a recipient of the Joseph E. Zins Early-Career Distinguished Contribution Award for Action Research in Social and Emotional Learning. Check our website soon for registration information.



Ready At Five Welcomes New Leadership



The Executive Leadership Committee is pleased to welcome Susan Foulds as Ready At Five's Interim Executive Director. Ms. Foulds is a dynamic results-oriented leader with more than 25 years demonstrated success in producing revenue, executive management, governance, marketing, and strategic planning in both not-for-profit and corporate sectors. Foulds began her career in advertising on the Grey, New York account management team, where she co-produced an award-winning trade campaign for the National Dairy Board. Acting as Development Director for GLSEN, and a catalyst for change and innovation, she initiated and successfully completed the process for GLSEN to become a sponsored campaign of the Ad Council (ThinkB4YouSpeak).

She began her independent consultancy in 2007, and has focused on interim senior management assignments supporting clients through critical transition periods, and involving resource development, strategic planning and marketing. She holds a BS in Communications from the University of Tennessee.

Additionally, we are happy to announce that Robin Hopkins has been promoted to Deputy Director of Ready At Five. Ms. Hopkins has been the Senior Program Director at Ready At Five since 2015. She holds a Master's Degree in Educational Studies and graduate certificates in Teaching Reading and Leadership in Technology Integration from the Johns Hopkins University, and an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Towson University. Robin has extensive knowledge and experience with Ready At Five's programs and services, and has an excellent reputation in the early childhood community. She will work with Ready At Five's committed staff to provide continuity while a full search for a permanent Executive Director takes place.



Along with this leadership team, the guidance from our Executive Leadership Committee will ensure that Ready At Five continues to be a strong partner and leader in Maryland's early childhood community, supporting educators, families, and children with a thoughtful plan for leadership transition.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month

A healthy child is able to start school ready to learn. That is why keeping your child healthy from birth matters so much. Begin brushing your child's teeth at least two times every day with a small soft toothbrush. Use only a small (pea-sized) amount of toothpaste. Help your child brush until age 8.



Celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month with more of our [Health Care for Your Child Parent Tips!](#)



Howard County Executive Visits the Parent Leadership Learning Party at the Cradlerock Judy Center

Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman joined the Parent Leadership Learning Party at the Cradlerock Judy Center in January.

This [Learning Party](#), developed in collaboration with experts at EPIC (Every

Person Influences Children), provides parents and families with important leadership and advocacy skills to promote civic engagement in the familiar and comfortable Learning Party format. The Parent Leadership Learning Party is part of a larger effort to create and sustain local parent leadership efforts through the Early Childhood Advisory Councils, Judy Centers, and public school systems. Thank you to Howard County Public Schools Early Childhood Programs Office and the Judy Center at Cradlerock for supporting this Learning Party!

The Parent Leadership Learning Party is designed to support parents/family members as they take an active role in their child's education and in schools, early learning programs, and local communities. Parent Leadership Learning Parties support growth and development in four areas:

- Trust and Conflict
- Communication
- Advocacy
- Idea Implementation

The Parent Leadership Learning Party has been designed to meet Goal 7 of the [Maryland Family Engagement Framework](#): Family engagement initiatives should support the development of families as leaders and child advocates. When parents and families are empowered, they can be a strong force for positive change in their child's education and in many other areas of life. Therefore, Maryland initiatives and the family engagement practices of early care and education providers should support families to participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

There are opportunities for every jurisdiction in Maryland to receive training in Parent Leadership Learning Parties - please contact [Robin Hopkins](#) if you are interested.

Check Out Our Little Free Library!

Many families have fewer than 10 books at home, yet research shows that home library size has a very substantial effect on educational achievement. To meet the need for more books in homes for both children and adults, Ready At Five is now a Little Free Library Ambassador in a program sponsored by the [Baltimore Campaign for Grade Level Reading](#). Each month, Ready At Five will bring books and parent resources to the Little Free Library of the Fred B. Ledig Recreation Center. If you'd like to contribute any new or gently-used books for children and adults, you can send them to: Fred B. Ledig Recreation Center, 301 S Beechfield Ave, Baltimore, MD 21229 or drop them by the center and add them to the library!



Ready At Five has what you're looking for - SCHOOL READINESS - publications

Provide families with information and tools they need to support their child's learning and development. Distribute them at your program, kindergarten roundup, family engagement events, summer learning and more. Ready At Five has the resources you need to help your families succeed.



Resources available in English & Spanish

Visit our website www.readyatfive.org to download or order our publications. For more information and special orders contact monique@readyatfive.org or 410/788-5725.

Featured Resources

Ready At Five has what you're looking for - School Readiness Publications!

Please [click here](#) for the order form or visit our [website](#) to find out about the [programs](#) we offer and for our Family Engagement Resources and our Parents Matter publication (available in English and Spanish).

COMING SOON!



**A NEW
FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT
WEBSITE**

Connect with the MD Family Engagement Community on
Facebook/Twitter @MDEngageEarly



Congratulations to Our ReadyRosie Contest Winners!

The following people: Kathy Mead, Cathy Whitfield, Christine Grabisch, Rehana Ali, Melissa McCarter, Lucy Austin, Tameron Marriner, Debra Lohman, Casey Dawson, Shannon Shultie, Tammy Maunes, Patricia McKenzie, Tawanda Small, Christine Rousseau, Mary Sterrett, Shane Morton, Kristen Moody, Michaela Hatlee, Jennifer Fohner and Stephanie Taylor were randomly selected (using <https://www.miniwebtool.com/random-name-picker/>) to win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card because of the wonderful job they did in signing up 15 or more families for ReadyRosie. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to your families and children.



► Donate Now

Help us as we work to ensure that all children in Maryland have the foundational skills needed for future success in school, career and life.



Ready at Five is a self-sustaining program of the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT), and does not receive funding from the MBRT.
One-time or monthly donations of \$100 or more are sought and gratefully accepted to expand Ready At Five's impact. To contribute this; or any, amount [click here](#)

Ready At Five
5520 Research Park Drive, Suite 150
Baltimore, MD 21228
www.readyatfive.org

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